Darwin Initiative Extra Annual Report

To be completed with reference to the "Project Reporting Information Note": (https://www.darwininitiative.org.uk/resources-for-projects/information-notes-learning-notes-briefing-papers-and-reviews/).

It is expected that this report will be a **maximum of 20 pages** in length, excluding annexes)

Submission Deadline: 30th April 2023

Submit to: BCF-Reports@niras.com including your project ref in the subject line

Darwin Initiative Project Information

Project reference	DAREX001
Project title	Developing a Global Biodiversity Standard certification for tree-planting and restoration
Country/ies	Uganda, Kenya, Madagascar, Peru, Brazil, India
Lead Partner	Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI)
Project partner(s)	Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), World Agroforestry Centre – ICRAF, TRAFFIC, Ecosia, The Plan Vivo Foundation (PVF), 1t.org, Jardim Bôtanico Araribá, Huarango Nature, Auroville Botanical Gardens, Missouri Botanical Gardens Madagascar, Brackenhurst Botanic Gardens, Tooro Botanical Gardens.
Darwin Initiative grant value	£2,693,374.00
Start/end dates of project	01/04/2022 - 31/03/2027
Reporting period (e.g. Apr 2022 – Mar 2023) and number (e.g. Annual Report 1, 2, 3)	April 2022 – March 2023 Year 1
Project Leader name	Paul Smith
Project website/blog/social media	https://www.biodiversitystandard.org/
Report author(s) and date	David Bartholomew & Paul Smith – 25/04/2023

1. Project summary

Governments, corporations, and civil society have pledged hundreds of millions of hectares for tree-planting, reforestation, and forest restoration, primarily to sequester carbon. The Bonn Challenge alone comprises pledges by 61 countries covering over 200mha to date, and a target of 350mha by 2030.

The massive scale and the speed at which tree-planting has gained momentum during the past few years has led to many poorly designed projects, with challenges, and failures frequently highlighted in the scientific literature (e.g., Bond et al., 2019; Lewis et al., 2019; Crane, 2020; Fagan et al., 2020; Friggens et al., 2020; Hohl et al., 2020; Holl & Brancalion, 2020; Coleman et al., 2021). Tree-planting brokers have also proliferated, offering companies the opportunity to offset their CO_2 emissions but without the data and expertise to ensure that biodiversity is not harmed (see WWF's Tree Planting by Businesses, Mansourian and Vallauri, 2020).

Furthermore, large-scale tree-planting efforts have continued to be promoted and celebrated often without any indication of the species planted, the large-scale use of (sometimes invasive) non-native species (e.g., Richardson & Kluge, 2008; Kull et al., 2019; Dyderski & Jagodziński, 2020), and the potential for associated deforestation of intact native forests, thus potentially causing net carbon loss instead of gain. Despite good intentions, many tree-planting efforts use a restricted palette of inappropriate but readily available tree species, with potentially negative consequences for biodiversity and for the people whose livelihoods depend on those trees – through either carbon payments, the ecosystem services they provide or their commodity value. When implemented poorly, these projects do not help alleviate poverty.

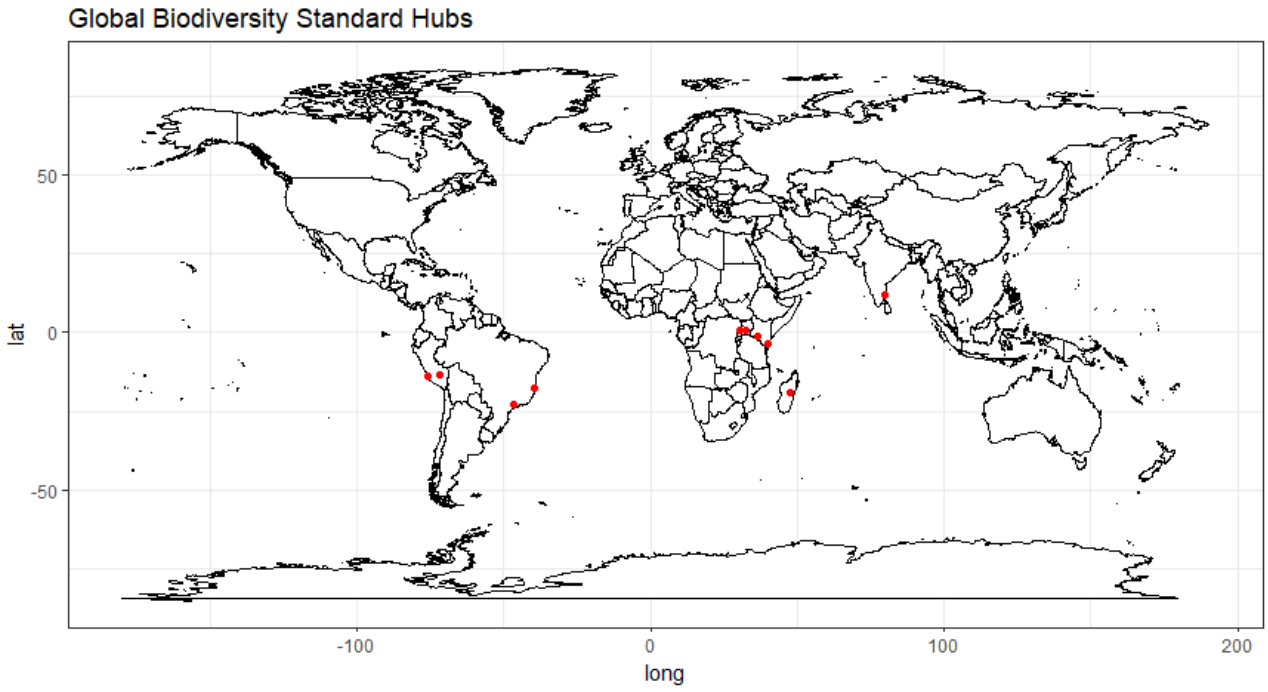
Simultaneously, BGCI's recent State of the World's Trees report, shows that 30% of the world's trees (17,500 species) are threatened with extinction. Clearly, we are missing opportunities for species recovery and positive biodiversity outcomes.

The botanical, ecological restoration and agroforestry communities have attempted to influence a wide range of large-scale tree-planting initiatives, including the IUCN Bonn Challenge Secretariat, The Nature Conservancy, 1t.org, Trillion Trees, the Global Evergreening Alliance, Ecosia, Plan Vivo and various corporate entities. However, few financial mechanisms reward positive impacts on biodiversity, and there is little incentive to incorporate native species into planting programmes. Furthermore, the imperatives to sequester carbon as fast as possible and to deliver income benefits through fast growing cash-crops means that exotic tree species are often preferred. Following discussions with corporate and NGO partners, we believe that an accessible certification recognising positive impacts on biodiversity would be highly valued, particularly if combined with mentoring to improve biodiversity and local capacity in tree-planting and reforestation initiatives.

While some current certifications incorporate biodiversity (e.g., FSC's High Conservation Value scheme), they are primarily geared to large-scale commercial tree-planting, e.g., palm oil. Our intention is to create a certification that is accessible and affordable to all, including grassroots organisations, NGOs, and government agencies. The Global Biodiversity Standard as outlined in this proposal, and during the first 5 years, will focus on tree planting and reforestation; the intent is to broaden it to include more ecosystems over time.

This project aims to develop a site- based Global Biodiversity Standard certification, which will provide assurances to investors, build local capacity to assess impacts on biodiversity, and mentor practitioners on planting the right trees in the right places for better biodiversity, carbon, and livelihood outcomes.

Figure 1: Map of the Global Biodiversity Standard Hubs



2. Project stakeholders/ partners

Thirteen partner organisations implement this project. Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI) acts as the lead partner of the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) project. BGCI coordinates the GBS, leads the development of relationships among the various partners, and leads various components of the project.

In addition to BGCI, six partner organisations provide technical input on the development of the GBS. The technical partners of the project are the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER), the World Agroforestry Centre – ICRAF, TRAFFIC, Ecosia, the Plan Vivo Foundation (PVF) and the World Economic Forum - 1t.org. The technical partners meet quarterly during steering committee meetings to plan project activities, monitor progress, and make decisions.

Six additional partners help to implement the GBS across six biodiverse countries. Driven by demand stemming from the host countries, these hub partners are Jardim Botânico Araribá (Brazil), Huarango Nature (Peru), Auroville Botanical Gardens (India), Missouri Botanical Gardens (Madagascar), Centre for Ecological Restoration - Kenya (Kenya) and Tooro Botanical Gardens (Uganda). The hub partners meet monthly to share ideas and project updates, with BGCI coordinating these interactions. The partnerships formed among the regional hubs have been a major strength and achievement of year one. The hubs have shared expertise on a wide range of topics, including biodiversity survey techniques, geo-spatial data processing and stakeholder engagement. The sharing of knowledge among these partners has improved the development and implementation of the GBS methodology.

Collaboration across the thirteen partner organisations has helped to make progress with the implementation of the four outputs of the GBS project as follows:

Output 1: A scientifically credible, objective, and accessible Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) and certification methodology in place and available to tree-planting and forest restoration initiatives by the end of year 2.

BGCI, SER, TRAFFIC and PVF are working together to develop the methodology for the GBS. BGCI and SER have worked together to ensure the methodology aligns with global policy frameworks and promotes best practices for ecosystem restoration. TRAFFIC and PVF have worked together to lead the development of the assessment of criteria related to community, engagement, and socio-economic impact. Ecosia, PVF and 1t.org have assisted with the development of the GBS methodology by coordinating a range of sites for testing the GBS methodology. The six hub organisations have worked closely with all the technical partners, a range of other tree-planting/restoration organisations and local communities to test the methodology across a range of locations and conditions. Major progress in strengthening the relationships across all partners was achieved during a one-week workshop in January 2023, where a joint review of the GBS methodology was undertaken.

Output 2: Hubs of expertise and data established to support Global Biodiversity Standard assessments and forest restoration mentorship in at least 6 highly biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.

BGCI, SER, ICRAF and TRAFFIC are collaborating to provide training, data, and accreditation certificates for the GBS project. These organisations work closely with the six hub partners to identify the data and training needed to implement the GBS assessment process. By working together, they ensure a feedback loop is closed and appropriate data and training are provided. 1t.org helps to strengthen the collection of data by offering connections across multi-stakeholder regional action groups.

Output 3: A self-sustaining business model and plan for scaling up the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) to at least 10 highly biodiverse countries and a communications plan for promoting the GBS worldwide developed by the end of year 3.

BGCI, SER, ICRAF, TRAFFIC and PVF are working together to support the development of a business case for the GBS. SER, TRAFFIC and PVF have experience of certification schemes and standards and share experiences for optimisation of the GBS business model. These technical partners are working with the six hub partners to receive feedback on the demand, costs, and sustainability of the GBS. 1t.org is helping to strengthen the business model by promoting restoration employment opportunities.

Output 4: The Global Biodiversity Standard and certification adopted and used by policymakers, financiers, brokers and practitioners of tree-planting, reforestation and forest restoration managing at least 250 sites in at least 10 countries by project end.

BGCI, SER and Ecosia collaborate on the communications and marketing of the GBS, helping to mainstream the GBS into international restoration efforts.

Beyond the official partners of the project, the project is engaging various other stakeholders. Restoration practitioners have interacted with the hub partners, with mentoring on how to improve restoration projects provided. Local communities have engaged with the project during the testing of the GBS methodology via stakeholder engagement surveys.

3. Project progress

3.1 Progress in carrying out project Activities

Activity 1.1. Draft GBS certification assessment methodology developed by the end of year 1.

During year 1 of the project, draft versions of the three components of the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) methodology were developed: (i) an online application form, (ii) a remote sensing methodology (Annex 4), and (iii) a field survey form. In addition, a scoring system, an exclusion list and a set of terms and conditions were drafted.

Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), the Society of Ecological Restoration (SER), Plan Vivo Foundation (PVF) and TRAFFIC led the development of the online application form and the field survey form, with all other partners contributing feedback on its content. BGCI wrote an initial set of questions for both the online application form and the field survey form. Ten GBS hubs tested these questions across six biodiverse countries (see Activity 1.2).

In 2022, SER recruited a Restoration Fellow to work on the GBS project. Alongside SER's International Policy Lead, the SER restoration fellow worked to align the methodology with global policy and standards for ecosystem restoration (see Annex 4). One major modification was aligning the GBS assessment with SER's recovery wheel (Gann *et al.* 2019). The GBS assessment methodology now involves assessing change in each of the sub-attributes associated with the recovery wheel from project inception to current conditions.

PVF and TRAFFIC developed questions related to community, engagement, and socio-economic impacts of restoration projects for both the online application and field survey forms. PVF provided an exclusion list to ensure GBS certified projects implement social safeguards. BGCI and TRAFFIC helped review the exclusion list and developed a terms and conditions for the standard.

Meanwhile, BGCI sub-contracted the remote sensing component to Space Intelligence. They reviewed the potential remote sensing options and drafted a methodology to measure deforestation and ecosystem degradation from satellite imagery. Space Intelligence provided a consultancy report (see Annex 5) that outlines their recommended remote sensing methodology.

All project partners of the GBS convened in Limuru, Kenya, in January 2023 for a workshop to review the methodology of the GBS (see Annex 6). The hubs provided feedback on the initial online and field survey forms. SER presented their updated version of the form and project partners provided feedback on the various components. During the workshop, hubs recommended that the field survey form should be simplified to ease assessment and that the questions should align more clearly with the assessment criteria of the GBS. Attendees of the workshop also identified inadequacies with the remote sensing component to assess historical trends in biodiversity. Partners agreed to work together to improve this during year 2 of the project. Overall, the workshop was a major success and project partners made significant progress to improve the methodology.

Following recommendations from the Limuru workshop, the technical partners worked to modify the GBS methodology. During Q4 of year 1, BGCI worked with SER to improve the online application and field survey forms. They also developed a scoring system for the GBS to make connections between the GBS criteria and field survey questions clearer. PVF and TRAFFIC also worked together to improve assessment of criterion 3, by modifying the online application and field survey form questions around community, engagement, and socio-economic impacts and by developing a scoring system for of the GBS based on these questions.

During Q4 of year 1, translators also translated the draft versions of the GBS online application form, field survey form, scoring system, exclusion list, and terms and conditions from English into French, Spanish and Portuguese. These forms and documents are publicly available on BGCI's website.

Activity 1.2. Draft methodology tested in real world conditions in at least 6 countries by the end of year 2.

During the first year of funding, the draft methodology of the global biodiversity standard has been **tested at 74 sites** across six biodiverse countries. The methodology has been tested in Brazil, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Peru, and Uganda across a range of sites, including protected areas, restoration sites and agroforestry sites. PVF and Ecosia, technical partners of the GBS, both agreed for their sites to be used for testing the GBS methodology. PVF identified eight sites suitable for testing: 2 mangrove forest sites in Kenya and six agroforestry sites in Uganda (see Annex 7). Ecosia supported the methodology testing by providing sites in Peru, Brazil, Kenya, and Uganda for testing (see Annex 8). Due to delays in receiving funding from the Darwin Initiative, fewer PVF and Ecosia sites were tested than had been planned, however, this was more than made up for with additional sites provided by other practitioners.

In Brazil, hubs were created by the Jardim Botânico Araribá and the Arboretum programme to implement testing of the methodology. The Jardim Botânico Araribá tested the methodology at three restoration area sites in São Paulo state, ranging in size from 5.38 ha to 116 ha (see Annex 9). The Arboretum programme hub also tested 3 small restoration area sites (1.9-2.48ha) in Bahia.

In India, a hub was established at Auroville Botanical Gardens, who carried out testing of the methodology across nine sites (see Annex 10). These sites ranged in size from 8 ha to 5000 ha and covered a range of land uses. These include long-term reforestation projects (25-40 years old), mine restoration sites, privately owned protected forests, forest department reserve forest and trust owned protected sanctuaries. Eight of the nine test sites were in Tamil Nadu state, with one test site in Gujarat.

In Kenya, the Centre for Ecological Restoration – Kenya (CER-K) established hubs in the highlands and coastal regions. These hubs tested the GBS methodology across seven sites, including three agroforestry sites, two mangrove sites, a mixed land use site and a forest reserve site (see Annex 11).

In Madagascar, a contract was signed with Missouri Botanical Gardens' Madagascar programme to test the GBS methodology across Madagascar. In total, the Madagascar hub tested the GBS methodology at six sites (see Annex 12), ranging in size from 229 ha to 2745 ha. The test sites covered three vegetation types: humid forest, subhumid forest surrounded by grassland and littoral forest. All six test sites were in protected areas.

In Peru, Huarango Nature established two hubs to test the methodology of the GBS (see Annex 13). The coastal and north Andean hub tested the methodology across 17 small sites (~1 ha). The southern Andean hub tested the methodology at two larger sites in Soraypampa (20 ha) and Taucamarca (500 ha).

In Uganda, the GBS methodology was tested at 27 sites by Tooro Botanical Gardens (see Annex 14). These sites covered protected areas, active restoration sites, agroforestry, and plantation

forest sites. The test sites covered a range of habitats including forest, wooded grassland, and anthropogenic habitats.

Activity 1.3. Methodology refined and finalised by end of year 2.

All three components of the GBS methodology (online application, remote sensing, and field survey form) have been refined over the past year. Details of how the methodology has been refined are outlined under activity 1.1.

Activity 1.4. GBS application process available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French by the end of year 2.

Significant progress has been made in making the GBS application process available to practitioners during the first year of the project. A draft version of the application form is available online in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. This online application form will be refined during year two of the project and will be updated accordingly. A bespoke web-browser application platform has been identified as the optimal solution for hosting the online application forms. This app will be developed during the second year of the project.

Activity 2.1. At least 10 training hubs established in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of quarter 2, year 2.

During the first year of the project, progress has been made to equip ten training hubs for the GBS across six biodiverse countries. The ten hubs are located in Brazil (Jardim Botânico Araribá and Arboretum Programme), India (Auroville Botanical Gardens), Kenya (2 x Centre for Ecological Restoration – Kenya hubs), Madagascar (Missouri Botanical Gardens Madagascar), Peru (2x Huarango Nature GBS hubs) and Uganda (2x Tooro Botanical Gardens GBS Hubs).

In Brazil, Guaraci M. Diniz Jr. (Manager) and Luiz Henrique Rondina Baqueiro (Biologist) coordinate the GBS hub at Jardim Botânico Araribá, São Paulo. In Bahia, Natália Coelho and Kamila Paganelli coordinate the second Brazilian GBS hub for the Arboretum Programme.

In India, Auroville Botanical Gardens have established a GBS hub coordinated by Paul Blanchflower. Initially Indhu Ayyanaar led the implementation of the GBS project, before being replaced by Kiran Baldwin in August 2022. Six other members of staff have also helped to implement the first year of the GBS project.

In Kenya, the Centre for Ecological Restoration – Kenya established two hubs. These hubs span two of the main biomes of Kenya and are in the highlands (Brackenhurst Botanic Garden and Forest) and the coastal forest (Kilifi Coastal Hub). The Kenyan hubs are coordinated by Jonathan Jenkins, with support from Andrew Gichira, Victor Otieno, Tobin Mustio and Emma Wakio.

In Madagascar, Missouri Botanic Gardens Madagascar have established a GBS hub with Narindra Ramahefamanana (Focal Point) and Chris Birkinshaw (Technical Advisor) working on the project.

In Peru, Huarango Nature have established two GBS hubs, located in the costal and north Andean region, and the South Andean region. Miguel Bailetti coordinates the costal and north Andean hub, whilst José Manuel Mamani coordinates the South Andean hub.

In Uganda, Tooro Botanical Gardens established two GBS hubs. They recruited Gabriel Alele as the GBS manager, Sebastian Walaita as the Forester, Said Musa Mutegeki as the Botanist and Stephen Tumusime as the Ornithologist.

All the 11 hubs equipped themselves throughout year 1 of the project with a range of equipment, including computers, data management and storage equipment, equipment for fieldwork, personal protective equipment, and various training materials.

Activity 2.2. Full suite of GBS training materials developed by the end of quarter 2, year 2.

During the GBS workshop in Limuru, Kenya in January, a list of data and training resources needed for the implementation of the GBS methodology were identified (see Annex 15). These included guidebooks on flora and fauna, databases on invasive species, threatened species and synonyms, and high-resolution vegetation maps. There is also a need to have a range of globally recognised reference protocols on ecosystem restoration and for the development of a mobile app to implement the assessment in the field.

In addition to these resources, a range of training courses were identified as needed for the implementation of the GBS. These include technical skills, such as GPS use, GIS, data analysis and fieldwork techniques. Communication skills were also identified as an important training need, with courses on decision making, facilitation, communication with officials, and media training identified as necessary skills. Further courses on business planning and teaching skills were also seen as necessary.

Following the identification of training needs, training modules have begun to be compiled. A manual for the GBS is in development and will be finalised by Y2Q2. In addition, a range of databases are being compiled by ICRAF (see Activity 2.4). Auroville Botanical Gardens have also begun preparation for a GPS course that will be implemented in May 2023. SER are compiling a range of ecological restoration training resources, and these will be shared with the hubs during Y2 of the project.

TRAFFIC has begun the development of a range of tools of training materials related to natural resource management and local value chains (see Annex 16). TRAFFIC has also drafted a preliminary version of a background paper entitled “Integrating a focus on sustainable use and trade of natural resources to restoration projects and tree planting initiatives” (see Annex 17), which will provide a useful resource for GBS assessors to understand best practices related to this topic. Moreover, TRAFFIC has worked with a consultant to compile two case studies related to integrating sustainable use and trade into restoration projects. These case studies focus on the Gula Gula Food Forest Program in West Sumatra, Indonesia (see Annex 18) and the Mikoko Pamoja at Gazi Mangrove Forest in Kenya (see Annex 19).

Activity 2.3. At least 200 people from at least 10 highly biodiverse countries (50% women) trained in biodiversity assessment and ecological restoration mentoring by the end of year 3.

During the first year of the project, 19 trainers for the GBS methodology have been identified from six highly biodiverse countries (Brazil, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Peru, Uganda). This has made substantial progress towards the milestone of having 20 trainers identified by the end of year 2. These trainers attended the GBS methodology review workshop in Kenya in January 2023, where they were introduced to the SER recovery wheel and other components of the methodology. These trainers will be trained to be trainers of the GBS methodology during Y2 of the project. Of the trainers identified, 21% are women.

Identification of additional assessors has already begun, with potential hubs and assessors identified in Chile, Malawi, Malaysia, Thailand, and Zambia. The identification of additional assessors will continue through years 2 and 3 of the project.

Activity 2.4. Comprehensive data on spatial distribution of biodiversity, seed sources, vegetation and tree distribution, socio-economic biodiversity values etc. compiled, processed and available online for at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.

A range of databases were identified and compiled during year 1 of the project. ICRAF led the compilation of these databases, with resources on useful tree species, tree species distribution, invasive species, and standardisation of plant names (see Annex 20).

The Global Useful Native Tree (GlobUNT) database is a new global database that was created via the project. GlobUNT allows users to obtain lists of native tree species for any country in the world and to filter native tree species across 10 major categories of human usage. These usages

cover animal food, environmental uses, fuel, gene sources, human food, invertebrate food, materials (excluding fuels), human and veterinary medicines, poisons, social uses, and a priority list for planting in tropics and subtropics. Manuscripts describing the GlobUNT have been submitted for peer review; with a recent preprint available online (Kindt et al. 2023). More details of how the GlobUNT database has been compiled can be found in Annex 20.

ICRAF also led on the compilation of presence observation data for trees from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF). They have developed a standardised protocol for checking the quality of GBIF data that includes steps such as standardisation of species names, exclusion of statistical outliers and removal of duplicated observations (see Annex 20). Overall, over 44 million occurrence records have been processed from GBIF. This data provides important information on the spatial distribution of biodiversity.

To assess the presence of invasive species, a criterion of the GBS, data on global invasive species has been compiled. ICRAF collated a list of 391 invasive tree species after searching the CABI Invasive Species Compendium in January 2023. The full list of invasive tree species is presented in Annex 20.

The compilation of high-resolution vegetation maps also began in year 1 of the project. ICRAF identified the vegetationmap4Africa (https://vegetationmap4africa.org/) as an appropriate resource for East African countries, including Kenya and Uganda where the GBS has been tested. These maps provide information on which native tree species can be planted and where they can be planted. Similar resources for other countries are starting to be compiled by the GBS hub partners, in Brazil, India, Madagascar and Peru.

Activity 2.5. Climate Resilience Assessment Tool and other spatial seed source and tree-planting guidance tools available online by the end of year 3.

BGCI led the development of the Climate Assessment Tool during year 1 of the project. This tool provides guidance on the likely suitability of taxa to the predicted future climate scenarios of a selected location. It achieves this by taking datasets of current known occurrences of taxa – such as those observed in the wild, in botanic gardens, and in general cultivation – and compares the current climate of these known occurrences to the predicted climate. By comparing the two climates a suitability score can be generated. The Climate Assessment Tool requires three necessary inputs: (i) a location, (ii) a taxon/taxa, and (iii) a climate scenario. The tool provides a risk code for the climate suitability of a species, giving an indicator the climatic resilience of species included in restoration projects. The Climate Assessment Tool is available at https://cat.bgci.org/

The Global Tree Knowledge Platform (https://www.worldagroforestry.org/tree-knowledge/type-of-resource/tree-databases) is under development by ICRAF to host a range of databases on trees, vegetation maps and data analysis packages that are useful to the GBS project. The databases include information on trees' uses, ecologies and other features. The new databases developed by ICRAF during year 1 of the project (see activity 2.4) will become available on the Global Tree Knowledge Platform over the next two years of the project.

Activity 2.6. Germination/propagation protocols available online for at least 10,000 tree species in Darwin eligible countries by project end.

Activities are planned for years 3-5.

Activity 3.1. Business model options paper developed and published by the end of year 2.

The Global Biodiversity Standard requires an effective business model to ensure sustainability and longevity beyond the five years of funding provided by the Darwin Initiative Extra programme. As part of the development of this business model, cost breakdowns were collected during the testing of the methodology in year 1. These cost breakdowns will be used during year 2 of the project to assess the various business model options and to identify an effective long-term business model for the GBS certificate. In preparation for year 2, potential consultants to

undertake market research have been identified, including the Cambridge Conservation Initiative (CCI) conservation leadership programme (and MPhil course) and Cambridge University's Judge Business School. In addition to these activities, TRAFFIC and PVF have had informal discussions regarding how the GBS certification could work in conjunction with other schemes.

Activity 3.2. Business Plan finalised and published by the end of year 3.

This activity is scheduled for year 3 of the project.

Activity 3.3. GBS Communication and Public Relations (PR) Plan published by end of year 3.

Activities are planned for years 2-3 of the project.

Activity 3.4 Business and Communications/PR Plans under implementation in years 4-5.

Activities are planned for years 4-5 of the project.

Activity 3.5 Business development on the prototype for return on investment (ROI) on use of the GBS methodology with respect to socio-economic and environmental outcomes (carbon sequestration, soil conservation, rural household reached, job creation). (Matched funding dependent)

Activities are planned for years 4-5 of the project.

Activity 4.1. GBS certification scheme promoted in at least 10 countries by the end of year 4.

Activities are planned for year 4 of the project.

Activity 4.2. GBS certification achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/ forest restoration projects in at least 10 countries by project end.

Activities are planned for years 4-5 of the project.

Activity 4.3. At least 5 governments, 20 companies and 10 NGOs/CBOs recommending or mandating the use of the Standard by project end.

Activities are planned for years 3-5 of the project.

3.2 Progress towards project Outputs

Output 0.1. Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) methodology completed and applications available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2.

The Global Biodiversity Standard started as a concept with the three basic elements of the methodology (an online application, a remote sensing assessment and ground survey assessment) identified, with a basic marketing plan developed. During the first year of the project, the GBS methodology has developed, and a draft version has been written. The online application form is available in draft version on BGCI's website in four languages (English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French). The draft version of the assessment form and the scoring system for the GBS are also available on BGCI's website in the four languages. The forms can be found using the following links:

Online Application Form:
English: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-application-form-english/
French: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-application-form-french/
Portuguese: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-application-form-portuguese/
Spanish: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-application-form-spanish/

Assessment Form and Scoring System:
English: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-assessment-form-english/
French: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-assessment-form-french/

Portuguese: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-assessment-form-portuguese/
Spanish: https://www.bgci.org/global-biodiversity-standard-assessment-form-spanish/

This output is expected to be achieved on schedule by the end of year 2 of the project.

Output 0.2. At least 10 training hubs established, ≥200 people trained and comprehensive data tools and resources available in at least 6 highly biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.

During the first year of the project, eleven training hubs for the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) have been established (baseline of zero hubs) and 19 people have been identified to be assessors and trainers of the GBS (baseline of zero; see Annexes 9-14) from six biodiverse countries. A range of data tools and training resources required to implement the GBS certification process have been identified (see Annex 15). Various data tools have been compiled during the first year of the project (see Activities 2.4-2.5) and training resources have started to be developed (see Activity 2.2). Assessors and trainers of the GBS will be certified to complete GBS assessments. This certification is in development and will be implemented during the second year of the project. The project has already identified potential additional training hubs for the GBS certification, which will be explored during year 2 of the project. This output is expected to be achieved on schedule by the end of year 3 of the project.

Output 0.3. A self-sustaining business model and plan for scaling up the GBS to at least 10 biodiverse countries worldwide developed by the end of year 3.

The business model and plan for the Global Biodiversity Standard is in development (baseline of no business plan). In the first year of the project, costs associated with GBS assessments have been collected by the hubs that are testing the methodology. This data will feed into developing a sustainable business model with various options to be explored during the second year of the project. Overall, there has not been significant progress towards achieving this output with most activities related to this output scheduled for years 2-3 of the project. This output is expected to be achieved on schedule by the end of year 3 of the project.

Output 0.4. GBS certification applied for and achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/ forest restoration projects by project end.

This output is dependent on the completion of output 0.1. Activities to achieve this output are planned for years 3-5 of the project.

3.3 Progress towards the project Outcome

Project Outcome: Global Biodiversity Standard certification achieved by 250 tree-planting/restoration projects, ≥200 people trained and 10 hubs of biodiversity assessment and restoration mentoring expertise established in 6 highly biodiverse countries by 2027

This project has made substantial progress towards achieving the project outcome during year 1 of the project. A draft version of the methodology has been developed during the first year and will be refined during the second year of the project. The draft methodology has been tested at 74 sites across six countries, and all these sites are potential candidates for certification by the Global Biodiversity Standard. Nineteen people have begun training in the GBS methodology and restoration mentoring and will train additional assessors of the standard over the next two years. Currently hubs have been established in six countries and potential options have been identified in an additional four countries. The indicators of the project have been effective at measuring the intended outcome of the project. The project is expected to achieve its outcome by the end of the funding period.

3.4 Monitoring of assumptions

Assumption 1: COVID-19 or other national/global disruption does not prevent the deployment of local or international expertise for site testing and methodological development (see below).
Comments: This assumption carries reduced risk now. COVID-19 disruption has reduced over the past year as restrictions, especially related to travel have been reduced.

Assumption 2: Carrying out GBS assessments is financially viable for local entities (e.g. botanic gardens, existing certification organizations, other types of biodiversity/ agroforestry/forest restoration organizations) and can compete with other income-generating priorities (see below).

Comments: This assumption still holds true. This assumption has been managed by detailing the costs of carrying out assessments and modifying the methodology accordingly, e.g., by modifying the length of field surveys to account for the financial cost. The financial viability is also being managed by developing a sustainable business model for the GBS. Other income-generating priorities have been managed by providing funds to recruit staff dedicated to the GBS work.

Assumption 3: A cost-effective but scientifically robust methodology is affordable to a wide range of practitioners (see below).
Comments: This assumption still holds true. The project is managing this assumption by exploring various options for the business model.

Assumption 4: Biodiversity impacts carry financial incentives either as a risk or as an opportunity and are sufficiently attractive to financiers, brokers and practitioners of tree-planting and forest restoration to apply for certification (see below).
Comments: This assumption still holds true. There has been increased publicity over the last year about minimising risks of failure and greenwashing in tree planting projects. This is especially true for the carbon credits market, meaning a certification scheme for restoration activities is likely to carry more incentives now than at project inception.

Assumption 5: COVID-19 or other national/global disruption does not prevent the deployment of local expertise for site testing (mitigated by wide potential selection of partner institutions/countries and the possibility of moving testing to another country).
Comments: This assumption carries reduced risk now. COVID-19 disruption has reduced over the past year as restrictions, especially related to travel have been reduced.

Assumption 6: Tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners are willing to participate in the testing phase (low risk; Ecosia, Plan Vivo and 1t.org have agreed to participate).
Comments: This assumption has reduced risk now. Ecosia and Plan Vivo have contributed sites for testing over the past year and are willing to continue with the testing phase over the next year. There have also been several additional sites who have been willing to participate in the testing phase (74 sites in total). The demand for testing exceeded the capacity of the project, meaning sites have already been identified for testing during year 2 of the project.

Assumption 7: COVID-19 or other national/global disruption doesn't prevent the deployment of international expertise to lead training and development (Mitigated by online training and a regional/national approach to face-to-face capacity building).
Comments: This assumption carries reduced risk now. COVID-19 disruption has reduced over the past year as restrictions, especially related to travel have been reduced. Online training events have been scheduled for some activities and are working well in a virtual setting.

Assumption 8: Global partners with biodiversity data and/or forest restoration information are willing to share their data and data tools (low risk: much of these data is already in the public domain).
Comments: This assumption holds true. This assumption has been managed because several of the partners, including BGCI, SER and ICRAF have well established relationships with many global partners that hold biodiversity data and/or restoration information. In addition, many datasets are increasingly becoming freely available under open access licences.

Assumption 9: Biodiversity, agroforestry, restoration, or other certification institutions/entities are willing to host training and data hubs (to a large degree this will be dependent on 3, below).
Comments: This assumption has reduced risk. Ten hubs across six countries have already signed up to be GBS hubs over the first year of the project and there is already interest from other organisations to host hubs.

Assumption 10: Hosting the GBS hubs and carrying out the certification assessments is financially viable for local biodiversity institutions and can compete with other income-generating priorities (low risk; we believe that it is possible for host entities to cover their costs and still be affordable compared to the very expensive schemes currently available).

Comments: This assumption still holds true. The project is considering various business model options that will maximise the financial viability of the certification scheme and the GBS hubs.

Assumption 11: Positive biodiversity impacts carry financial incentives either as a risk or as an opportunity and/or are sufficiently attractive to financiers, brokers and practitioners of tree-planting and forest restoration to apply for certification (mitigated by working with biodiversity +ve corporate partners packaging biodiversity and carbon together in premium packages).
Comments: This assumption still holds true. During year 1 of the project BGCI and the other technical partners have participated in regular meetings with the World Economic Forum and Biodiversity Credit Alliance regarding (i) the need for transparency around corporate impacts on biodiversity; (ii) metrics for measuring biodiversity impact and (iii) developing mechanisms for mitigating/compensating for biodiversity impacts. We have also met bilaterally with organisations including Verra, Gold Standard, Rio Tinto, Anglo-American, HSBC, and Rabobank who have all expressed an interest in the GBS either as a carbon plus package or as a mechanism for assessing/managing risks associated with biodiversity impact. We will continue to engage with these and similar organisations in year 2 with the aim of deploying the GBS methodology on their sites.

Assumption 12: A cost-effective but scientifically robust methodology is affordable to a wide range of practitioners. (Risk reduced by already having a strong technical network in place).
Comments: This assumption still holds true. The hub partners in all six countries have had no difficulty in finding practitioners and sites who see the value in the Global Biodiversity Standard. Of course, in year 1, the financial costs associated with GBS assessments have largely been borne by the project. However, hub partners in Kenya, Uganda, Madagascar, and India have already identified practitioners who are willing to pay for GBS assessments and mentoring so we are confident that there will be a market for the GBS provided that costs can be kept at a reasonable level (commensurate with actual hub costs covered in year 1 by the Darwin Initiative.

3.5 Impact: achievement of positive impact on biodiversity and poverty reduction

This project aims to have a positive impact on biodiversity by promoting the incorporation of native and threatened species into ecosystem restoration and agroforestry projects. The Global Biodiversity Standard also aims to mobilise global botanic knowledge and skills to increase the use of native and resilient seeds in tree planting projects, improving the biodiversity outputs of these tree-planting projects. This project has started to drive change in promoting the use of native and threatened species in tree-planting projects. Stakeholders of tree-planting projects have received mentoring from botanical experts during the project and have been informed how to improve the biodiversity benefits of their projects.

This project aims to reduce poverty in the short-term by providing training and increasing capacity of biodiversity institutions in low- and middle-income countries. The project has expanded the skillset of 16 individuals through training in the GBS methodology, which includes planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of restoration and agroforestry projects. The project has helped to mobilise funds from high income countries to low- and middle-income countries for testing of the GBS methodology.

In the medium term, this project aims to reduce poverty by generating an economy centred around native species tree-planting and ecosystem restoration. By developing the standard, momentum around this economic sector has begun, with interest in native seed supplies increasing.

Over the long-term, the project aims to reduce poverty by creating a paradigm shift in tree planting projects towards a focus on biodiversity rather than a simplistic focus on carbon and numbers of trees planted. By focusing on the concept of ‘right trees planted in the right place’, the GBS is increasing tree survival rates and the benefits received by local communities from native ecosystems. These benefits include generating income from employment, carbon credits, payment for ecosystem services, agroforestry, or commodity production (e.g., timber and NTFPs), in addition to providing local and sustainable fuelwood, increased water quantity and quality, and other environmental services that can increase quality of life.

4. Project support to the Conventions, Treaties or Agreements

The Newly agreed Global Biodiversity Framework has a much stronger focus on ecological restoration than the preceding Aichi targets. Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1 (participatory management), 2 (ecosystem restoration), 3 (protection), 4 (species recovery/conservation), 5 (sustainable harvesting), 6 (eliminate invasive species), 8 (impacts of climate change), 9 (sustainable management of wild species), 10 (sustainable production), 11 (restoration of ecosystem services), 12 (connectivity), 13 (benefit-sharing), 16 (sustainable consumption), 18 (reform perverse incentives), 20 (capacity building), 21 (availability of data & knowledge) and 23 (gender equality) are all explicitly addressed by the GBS methodology.

While it will take time for the new biodiversity framework to be incorporated into NBSAPs, this project is already helping to deliver existing NBSAP goals, for example:

- Uganda's NBSAP (2015-2025) notes that present National Forest Authority tree planting focuses on introduced species and that, although this is useful to meet short-term timber needs, they could threaten the survival of native species if there are no guidelines for private planting. To date, there are still no national guidelines, hence GBS implementation will address a need specifically identified in Uganda's NBSAP. The GBS will promote the incorporation of medicinal species in tree planting, and their sustainable use, which is of particular importance in Uganda, where 80% of the population depend on indigenous plant medicine.
- Kenya's NBSAP (2019-2030) Goal 2, Strategic target 22 calls for ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks to be enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030. There is huge interest in tree planting in Kenya, but the NBSAP also reports that, whilst plantations have increased in cover in recent years, all types of natural forest have decreased over the same period. The GBS will help to shift tree planting towards an approach that restores natural forest and benefits biodiversity, rather than solely increasing plantations.

All six hub countries have made Bonn Challenge pledges; Uganda: 2.5m ha, Kenya: 5.1m ha, Madagascar: 4m ha, Peru: 3.2m ha, Brazil: 12m ha, and India: 21m ha. All countries have set NDCs under the UNFCCC and Brazil, Kenya and Peru have submitted NAPs that include tree-planting and sustainable forests (other countries not yet submitted). For example, Brazil's NAP notes that demarcation of green areas, planting of trees, recovery, and protection of natural areas, should serve as the basis for local-level programmes for fostering adaptation and resilience, and Goal 3.4 calls for incorporation of climate risk into current policies for conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of biodiversity.

This project will develop and share climate-appropriate portfolios of tree diversity to reduce risks and seeks to shift the current 'carbon rush' towards ensuring Bonn Challenge pledges, NAPs and NDCs are biodiversity-positive, benefit people, and support climate change mitigation and resilience.

This project also addresses national development priorities in all the hub countries and the following global SDGs:

- SDG8 (decent work and economic growth) by training >200 people as auditors and to be certified restoration practitioners.
- SDG5 (gender equality) by ensuring all genders have equal opportunities in these training and employment opportunities.
- SDG13 (climate change) by creating biodiverse landscapes that support people, are resilient and have a greater capacity to adapt to a changing climate.
- SDG15 (life on land) by promoting biodiverse tree planting and restoration which reduces degraded land and biodiversity loss.

The aim is to have GBS certified projects in ten countries by project end (four countries in addition to the six where hubs will be established). The business model and plan will scale up GBS adoption, contributing to national targets in many additional countries in the medium-term.

5. Project support to poverty reduction

The direct beneficiaries of this project are:

1. **The staff members of the GBS hubs comprising local biodiversity experts, educators, and administrators.** The GBS business model focuses on empowering and enabling local biodiversity organisations, creating income opportunities and the opportunity to influence and improve land use and restoration outcomes in their own countries and regions. This is very different from prevalent carbon certification processes that sub-contract survey and certification work to international consultancy companies, using fly in, fly out consultants. Not only will GBS hub staff members be more familiar with their own biodiversity, but they will also understand local socio-economic drivers, enabling them to make much better value judgements about biodiversity trends in local contexts.
2. **Local communities and stakeholders.** A key criterion that the GBS methodology assesses is the extent to which local communities and stakeholders are participating in and benefitting from the restoration and management of biodiversity on the site being assessed. To achieve a high score and pass the GBS certification, restoration and tree-planting practitioners need to show that local people are part of value chains, including direct employment and supply of materials such as seeds and seedlings. This contrasts with high throughput, commercial forestry in which large volumes of cloned, exotic seedlings are sourced from multinational biotech or forestry companies, with no involvement or benefits accruing to local people other than perhaps tree-planting.

As indicated above, in the medium term, this project aims to reduce poverty by generating an economy centred around native species tree-planting and ecosystem restoration. By developing the standard, momentum around this economic sector has begun, with interest in native seed supplies increasing.

Over the long-term, the project aims to reduce poverty indirectly by creating a paradigm shift in tree planting projects towards a focus on biodiversity rather than a simplistic focus on carbon and numbers of trees planted. By focusing on the concept of ‘right trees planted in the right place’, the GBS is increasing tree survival rates and the benefits received by local communities from native ecosystems. These benefits include generating income from employment, carbon credits, payment for ecosystem services, agroforestry, or commodity production (e.g., timber and NTFPs), in addition to providing local and sustainable fuelwood, increased water quantity and quality, and other environmental services that can improve health and quality of life.

6. Gender equality and social inclusion

This project has promoted equality between persons of different gender and social backgrounds through the development of a methodology to assess criterion 3 of the GBS: Manage biodiversity in consultation and partnership with local communities and stakeholders. This methodology promotes the inclusion of stakeholders that are disadvantaged and vulnerable. It also promotes capacity building amongst these stakeholders and encourages the use of local knowledge and supply chains. These local knowledge and skillsets often belong to women and ethnic minorities. The methodology therefore promotes the inclusion of these groups in ecological restoration projects.

Please quantify the proportion of women on the Project Board[1].	64.7% (11/17)
Please quantify the proportion of project partners that are led by women, or which have a senior leadership team consisting of at least 50% women[2].	71.5% (5/7)

[1] A Project Board has overall authority for the project, is accountable for its success or failure, and supports the senior project manager to successfully deliver the project.

[2] Partners that have formal governance role in the project, and a formal relationship with the project that may involve staff costs and/or budget management responsibilities.

7. Monitoring and evaluation

The Project Manager (10% of time) and Project Leader (5% of time) from BGCI lead monitoring and evaluation activities for this project. The restoration hub managers who take the leading role for monitoring and evaluation of activities within their respective countries support these staff from BGCI.

In addition, a steering committee for the project has been established from the technical partners who meet throughout the project quarterly to assess progress against the log frame and performance indicators. These meetings take place online to maximise attendance and minimise unnecessary expenditure on travel. The steering committee review progress against the project implementation timetable, compare ongoing and completed activities against performance standards, review expenditure against the project budget and identify new potential risks and mitigating measures. These meetings additionally review how the project activities and outputs are contributing towards the overall project outcome. After each steering committee meeting, a report is prepared to document progress, adaptive management changes to the implementation timetable (see Annex 21).

Following discussions at the methodology review workshop in January 2023 in Kenya, an additional monitoring and evaluation component was added to the project. This activity encompasses monthly meetings amongst the hub partners to provide updates on project progress. In addition to providing monitoring and evaluation for the project, these meetings provide an opportunity for ideas and knowledge to be shared amongst the regional partners and hence builds capacity. The Project Manager writes up minutes from these meetings (see Annex 22).

Capacity building is a key aim of this project. The impact of capacity building efforts is monitored by assessing baseline knowledge and expertise related to restoration and biodiversity specifics, before and after trainees receive training and when trainees have put their skills into practice. The final measure of success here will be if trainees progress fully through the Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner programme. Currently no trainees have been awarded Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner recognition from this project because the project is still in its initial phase.

8. Lessons learnt

Various lessons were learnt during the first year of the project, related to administrative, management, technical, and M&E.

One of the major technical lessons learnt during year one of the project was the need to assess change rather than absolute levels of biodiversity. In the initial proposal and the first iteration of the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) methodology, projects were assessed on the amount of biodiversity found at the site. This methodology did not work as initially planned, favouring projects that had a baseline with high levels of biodiversity and discouraging projects that are working on highly degraded land. During the first year of the project, we learnt that we needed to modify our approach as the place where we needed to make change was to incentivise the use of native biodiversity in tree-planting projects working on degraded land. Consequently, a shift in methodology was made to focus on biodiversity improvements. This has also highlighted the need to modify the remote sensing component of the methodology to allow for baseline conditions to be more accurately estimated (see Annex 23).

9. Actions taken in response to previous reviews (if applicable)

This section is not applicable.

10. Risk Management

There have been no new risks that have arisen in the last 12 months. All risks have been managed as expected and there have been no significant adaptions to the project design to address changes to risk (see Annex 24).

11. Other comments on progress not covered elsewhere

A major difficulty arose during year one of the project around recruitment of staff at the lead partner (Botanic Gardens Conservation International – BGCI). Halfway through the year, the

project manager vacated the position and a new member of staff had to be recruited. This left 3 months without a project manager, in addition to two months when the new project manager was only employed part-time. Moreover, the communications officer assigned to work on this project also vacated their role, leaving a void of skills in public relations and communications. Recruitment for this position has recently been completed with a new communications officer joining BGCI. Additional time had to be dedicated to the project by the project lead and the Policy lead for certification development at SER in the second half of the project year to overcome this shortfall in labour.

12. Sustainability and legacy

During year 1, progress has been made to ensure the sustainability and legacy of this project. There has been significant interest in the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) from external corporate partners within the first year of the project. This has exceeded our initial expectations, with year 3 targeted as the transition point from testing the methodology on technical partner project sites to implementing the methodology on non-project partner sites. Evidence for the interest in the standard comes from the demand for testing the methodology. In our proposal, we aimed to test the methodology of the standard at 12 sites across the six hub partner countries by the end of Y2Q3. Already, we have managed to test the methodology at 74 sites within the first year. This includes testing on Acorn sites in Uganda that were paid for by Rabobank. We have also initiated conversations with other potential corporate clients, including Rio Tinto, Anglo-American, and HSBC. The GBS hub partner, CER-Kenya, carried out paid, independent work for Rabobank in year 1, and Tooro Botanical Garden have carried out independent work for Ecosia. Missouri Botanical Garden Madagascar is aiming to do this with Rio Tinto in year 2, all of which bodes well for a sustainable model in which the hubs not only carry out GBS assessments but also provide paid mentoring services for practitioners, ensuring (a) the financial security of the hubs, and (b) better outcomes for biodiversity.

13. Darwin Initiative identity

We have publicised the Darwin Initiative on the Global Biodiversity Standard's official website (https://www.biodiversitystandard.org/) by recognising the Darwin Initiative as a supporter of the project. This includes displaying the Darwin Initiative logo on the website.

14. Safeguarding

Has your Safeguarding Policy been updated in the past 12 months?		No
Have any concerns been investigated in the past 12 months		No
Does your project have a Safeguarding focal point?	No	
Has the focal point attended any formal training in the last 12 months?	N/A	
What proportion (and number) of project staff have received formal training on Safeguarding?		Past: 24 % [4] Planned: 0% [0]
Has there been any lessons learnt or challenges on Safeguarding in the past 12 months? Please ensure no sensitive data is included within responses. The project learnt that safeguards need to be explicitly written into the terms and conditions of the standard to avoid exploitation of vulnerable groups.		

Does the project have any developments or activities planned around Safeguarding in the coming 12 months? If so, please specify.

Safeguarding has been incorporated into the project methodology in two main ways:

1. All project grant agreements and Memoranda of Understanding require partners to adopt and adhere to safeguarding principles.
2. The GBS methodology itself has now incorporated safeguarding principles into the GBS assessment so that to be eligible for GBS assessments, all applicants are required to adopt and adhere to safeguarding principles in the form of an exclusion list.

15. Project expenditure

The project had an underspend of £44,820. This was largely caused by a delay in the receipt of the money that meant money allocated to testing the methodology on PVF and Ecosia sites and data mobilisation were delayed. Some of the underspend was compensated by an overspend on consultancy costs. This overspend on consultancy costs was because more time needed to be allocated to the Policy lead for certification development at SER. This was because of modifications to the methodology that meant more time was needed to align it with global policy and frameworks and because there was a long period where the project manager position was vacant, and this labour shortfall had to be overcome through additional consultancy time. There is a request to carry forward the underspend in operating costs to year 2 of the project to allow testing of the methodology on PVF and Ecosia sites.

Table 1: Project expenditure during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

Project spend (indicative) since last Annual Report	2022/23 Grant (£)	2022/23 Total Darwin Initiative Costs (£)	Variance %	Comments (please explain significant variances)
Staff costs	[redacted]			
Consultancy costs				
Overhead Costs				
Travel and subsistence				
Operating Costs				
Capital items				
Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)				
Others				
TOTAL	£623,374	£578,554	-7%	

These figures are draft values pending receipt of all invoices and receipts.

Table 2: Project mobilising of matched funding during the reporting period (1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023)

	Matched funding secured to date	Total matched funding expected by end of project
Matched funding leveraged by the partners to deliver the project.	[redacted]	
Total additional finance mobilised by new activities building on evidence, best practices and project (£)		

16. OPTIONAL: Outstanding achievements or progress of your project so far (300-400 words maximum). This section may be used for publicity purposes

I agree for the Biodiversity Challenge Funds Secretariat to publish the content of this section (please leave this line in to indicate your agreement to use any material you provide here).

File Type (Image / Video / Graphic)	File Name or File Location	Caption, country and credit	Online accounts to be tagged (leave blank if none)	Consent of subjects received (delete as necessary)
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No
				Yes / No

Annex 1: Report of progress and achievements against logframe for Financial Year 2022-2023

Project summary	SMART Indicators	Progress and Achievements April 2022 - March 2023	Actions required/planned for next period
Impact Biodiversity impacts of tree-planting and forest restoration for carbon sequestration and livelihoods are valued by policy-makers, financiers and practitioners, and 'right tree, right place' practices lead to better biodiversity/livelihood outcomes		There has been increased interest from financiers and practitioners in the Global Biodiversity Standard and the desire to incorporate native biodiversity into restoration projects. This has come earlier than expected in the project.	[redacted]
Outcome Global Biodiversity Standard certification achieved by 250 tree-planting/restoration projects, ≥200 people trained and 10 hubs of biodiversity assessment and restoration mentoring expertise established in 6 highly biodiverse countries by 2027	0.1. Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) methodology completed and applications available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2.	0.1 A draft version of the GBS methodology has been developed, including the online application, remote sensing, and field survey components. A draft scoring system, exclusion list, and terms and conditions of the GBS have been written. These are available online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.	0.1 The GBS methodology will be tested at additional sites in Y2. Using feedback from the tests and public consultation, the methodology will be refined. A manual will be drafted, and a mobile application will be developed for the application and assessment of the GBS. All resources will be translated from English into Spanish, Portuguese, and French.
	0.2. At least 10 training hubs established, ≥200 people trained and comprehensive data tools and resources available in at least 6 highly biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.	0.2 10 training hubs have been established and 19 assessors have been identified. Training and data needs for training hubs have been identified. Development of training resources and data tools has started.	0.2 Trainers from 10 training hubs will be trained in the GBS methodology and assessment process during Y2. Data tools and training resources will continue to be compiled and developed during Y2-3. Identification of people to train will continue during Y2-3.
	0.3. A self-sustaining business model and plan for scaling up the GBS to at least 10 biodiverse countries worldwide developed by the end of year 3.	0.3 Costs associated with the GBS have been collected that will feed into developing a sustainable business model. Discussions on potential business options have begun.	0.3 Market research on the sustainability of business model options will be undertaken during Y2. Analysis of the business model options will be drafted into a business model options paper.
	0.4. GBS certification applied for and achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/forest restoration projects by project end.	0.4 Activities to achieve this outcome are planned for Y3-5.	0.4 Activities to achieve this outcome are planned for Y3-5.
Output 1.	1.1. Draft GBS certification assessment methodology developed by the end of year 1.	1.1 A draft version of the GBS certification assessment methodology is available online in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.	

A scientifically credible, objective, and accessible Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) and certification methodology in place and available to tree-planting and forest restoration initiatives by the end of year 2.	1.2. Draft methodology tested in real world conditions in at least 6 countries by the end of year 2.	1.2 The draft methodology has been tested at 74 sites across 6 countries. A full list of test sites is available in Annexes 8-13.	
	1.3. Methodology refined and finalised by end of year 2.	1.3 The methodology is being refined and is currently available in draft format.	
	1.4. GBS application process available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2.	1.4 A draft version of the application process is available online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.	
Activity 1.1 1.1.1. Development of GBS certification methodology components assessment methodology, including online application process, remote sensing review and ground survey methodology, sub-contracted to technical partners by the end of Q1, year 1.		1.1.1 The online application process and ground survey methodology components were sub-contracted to SER, TRAFFIC and Plan Vivo. The remote sensing review was sub-contracted externally to Space Intelligence.	1.1.1 Completed
1.1.2. Draft GBS certification assessment methodology developed and published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish online by the end of Q4, year 1.		1.1.2 The GBS certification methodology has been developed and is published online in English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.	1.1.2 Completed
Activity 1.2 1.2.1. Agreements signed with at least 12 tree-planting/forest restoration project sites in at least 6 different biodiverse countries by the end of Q4, year 1.		1.2.1 Contracts have been signed with 74 project sites.	1.2.1 Completed.
1.2.2. Online application, remote sensing and ground survey methods tested with at least 12 tree-planting/forest restoration project sites in at least 6 different highly biodiverse countries by the end of Q3, year 2.		1.2.2 The remote sensing methodology has been tested on 11 sites. The online application and ground survey methodology has been tested on 74 sites.	1.2.2 The updated versions of the three methodology components will be tested on more sites during Y2 Q1-2.
Activity 1.3 1.3.1. Meetings held with project site practitioners and assessors, and verbal and written feedback received by the end of Q3, year 2.		1.3.1 The eleven regional hub partners have held meetings with project site practitioners.	1.3.1 Meetings between project site practitioners and assessors will continue in conjunction with testing the methodology during Y2 Q1-3
1.3.2. Final methodology agreed and published online by the end of Q4, year 2.		1.3.2 A draft version of the methodology is available online in four languages.	1.3.2 The methodology will be finalised during Y2 Q1-2 and will be published online during Y2 Q3.
Activity 1.4 1.4.1. GBS certification launched and publicised at UNFCCC COP-28 by the end of year 2		1.4.1 This activity is scheduled for Y2.	1.4.1 GBS certification will be launched and publicised at UNFCCC COP-28 in Y2Q3.

1.4.2. GBS application available online in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French by the end of year 2.		1.4.2 A draft version of the GBS application is available online in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.	1.4.2 GBS application will be updated and available online during Y2 Q1-4.
Output 2. Hubs of expertise and data established to support Global Biodiversity Standard assessments and forest restoration mentorship in at least 6 highly biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.	2.1. At least 10 training hubs established in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of quarter 2, year 2.	2.1 10 training hubs have been identified and are being equipped to implement the GBS (see Annexes 8-13).	
	2.2. Full suite of GBS training materials developed by the end of quarter 2, year 2.	2.2 A list of necessary training materials has been identified (see Annex 14). Training materials are being developed (see section 3.1).	
	2.3. At least 200 people from at least 10 highly biodiverse countries (50% women) trained in biodiversity assessment and ecological restoration mentoring by the end of year 3.	2.3 19 people have been identified to be trained in biodiversity assessment and ecological restoration mentoring (see Annexes 8-13).	
	2.4. Comprehensive data on spatial distribution of biodiversity, seed sources, vegetation and tree distribution, socio-economic biodiversity values etc. compiled, processed and available online for at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.	2.4 Data on spatial distribution of biodiversity, vegetation and tree distribution and socio-economic values of trees have started to be compiled and processed (see Annex 20). Databases are available on the Global Tree Knowledge Platform.	
	2.5. Climate Resilience Assessment Tool and other spatial seed source and tree-planting guidance tools available online by the end of year 3.	2.5 The Climate Resilience Assessment Tool is available online (https://cat.bgci.org/).	
	2.6. Germination/propagation protocols available online for at least 10,000 tree species in Darwin eligible countries by project end.	2.6 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y3-5.	
Activity 2.1. 2.1.1. At least 10 GBS hub host entities in at least 6 biodiverse countries identified and equipped with computers, survey and inventory equipment by the end of Q2, year 2.		2.1.1 10 GBS hub entities have been identified across six biodiverse countries and have started to be equipped with computers, survey, and inventory equipment.	2.1.1 The 10 GBS hubs will continue to be equipped with any remaining required equipment purchased during Y2 Q1-2.
2.1.2. Potential trainers in each training hub vetted and identified by the end of year 1.		2.1.2 19 trainers have been identified from the 10 hubs.	2.1.2 Completed
Activity 2.2. 2.2.1. Data, tools, and resources necessary for GBS assessments specific to each training hub collated and used in at least 10 hubs in 6 biodiverse countries by the end of Q2, year 2.		2.2.1 Data and resource needs have been identified. Compilation of data, tools and resources has begun.	2.2.1 Continued collation of data resources will be made during Y2 Q1-2.
2.2.2. Training modules in GBS and ER (online and face to face) developed in English, Spanish and French by the end of Q2, year 2.		2.2.2 Training modules in GBS and ER are in the process of being developed.	2.2.2 Training modules in GBS and ER will be finalised during Y2 Q1-2.

Activity 2.3 2.3.1. At least 20 trainers trained and certified in GBS assessment by the end of year 2.	2.3.1 16 trainers have been identified. Training in the GBS methodology has started during Y1Q4.	2.3.1 Additional trainers will be identified during Y2 Q1-2. Training and certification of trainers will be completed during Y2.
2.3.2. At least a further 180 people trained and certified in GBS assessment (≥200 people total), including through either formal CERP level achievement or through a dedicated certificate, issued by the SER CERP program credentialing these people as qualified to conduct GBS audits related to tree-planting and reforestation/forest restoration by the end of year 3.	2.3.2 This activity is planned for Y2-3.	2.3.2 Additional assessors of the GBS will be identified during Y2 and formal training of these additional assessors will commence in Y2.
Activity 2.4 2.4.1. Digital potential vegetation maps (high resolution corresponding to the resolution of bioclimatic raster data) available online providing natural habitat reference data for at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.	2.4.1 Digital potential vegetation maps are available in 2 biodiverse countries.	2.4.1 Digital potential vegetation maps will continue to be developed during Y2-3.
2.4.2. Provide guidelines on compiling, cleaning, and bias-reduction of geospatial data on species occurrence, including from GBIF and BIEN by end of year 2.	2.4.2 Guidelines on compiling, cleaning, and reducing bias of GBIF geo-spatial data have been outlined.	2.4.2 Guidelines for compiling, cleaning and bias-reduction of BIEN data will be outlined during Y2.
2.4.3 Comprehensive geo-referenced tree species digital distribution data available to GBS assessors and mentors in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3 (note that access to data on distributions of rare and threatened species will be carefully managed).	2.4.3 Geo-referenced tree species distribution data is being compiled.	2.4.3 Compilation of species distribution data will continue to be compiled during Y2-3.
Activity 2.5 2.5.1. Climate Resilience Assessment Tool calibrated for native tree floras and available to tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.	2.5.1 The Climate Resilience Assessment Tool has been calibrated as is freely available online.	2.5.1 Completed
2.5.2. Tree planting/forest restoration practitioners have access to and are familiar with the different databases, guidelines and maps available via the Global Tree Knowledge Platform (https://www.worldagroforestry.org/tree-knowledge) by the end of year 3	2.5.2 Databases and maps are available on the Global Tree Knowledge Platform.	2.5.2 Guidelines on databases and maps will be compiled, alongside additional databases during Y2-3. Training on use of the Global Tree Knowledge Platform will be made to GBS trainers during Y2.
Activity 2.6 2.6.1. Germination protocols for native tree species in at least 10 highly biodiverse countries available digitally online and accessible to tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners through a forest restoration resource hub and tools such as SER's Restoration Resource Center, Kew's Seed Information Database (n= at least 10,000 native tree species), and the UN FAO/CIFOR-ICRAF Transformative Partnership Platform for Agroecology by project end.	2.6.1 This activity is planned for Y3-5.	2.6.1 This activity is planned for Y3-5.
2.6.2. Propagation and aftercare protocols for native species in at least 10 Darwin eligible biodiverse countries available digitally online and accessible to tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners through an ER resource hub and BGCI's PlantSearch propagation tool (n= at least 10,000 native tree species) by project end.	2.6.2 This activity is planned for Y3-5.	2.6.2 This activity is planned for Y3-5.

Output 3. A self-sustaining business model and plan for scaling up the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) to at least 10 highly biodiverse countries and a communications plan for promoting the GBS worldwide developed by the end of year 3.	3.1. Business model options paper developed and published by the end of year 2.	3.1 Costs associated with undertaking assessments have been collected during Y1. Tiering and re-assessment of the GBS certification have been discussed by partners (see Annexes 6 & 21). These discussions will feed into developing different business model options.	
	3.2. Business Plan finalised and published by the end of year 3	3.2 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y2-3.	
	3.3. GBS Communication and Public Relations (PR) Plan published by end of year 3.	3.3 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y2-3.	
	3.4 Business and Communications/PR Plans under implementation in years 4-5.	3.4 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y4-5	
	3.5 Business development on the prototype for return on investment (ROI) on use of the GBS methodology with respect to socio-economic and environmental outcomes (carbon sequestration, soil conservation, rural household reached, job creation). (Matched funding dependent)	3.5 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y4-5.	
Activity 3.1 3.1.1. Data collected on costs associated with carrying out GBS assessments throughout testing phase (i.e., by end of Q3, year 2)		3.1.1. Costs of the carrying out the GBS assessments have been collected during testing of the methodology during Y1.	3.1.1. Compilation of the full costs of carrying out the assessments will be completed during Y2 Q1-3. This will include calculating any change in costs incurred by updating the GBS methodology.
3.1.2. Market analysis (internet research, questionnaire, and interviews) carried out to gather data on costs and cost/benefits of other certification schemes to estimate (1) demand for biodiversity certification, and (2) competitive charging rates by end of Q3, year 2		3.1.2 Potential consultants to undertake market research have been identified.	3.1.2 Market analysis of the certification schemes will be undertaken during Y2 Q1-3.
3.1.3. Business model options paper developed by the end of year 2 and shared with implementing partners.		3.1.3 This activity is scheduled for Y2.	3.1.3 Analysis of the results from the market research (3.1.2) will be used to draft a business model options paper.
Activity 3.2 3.2.1. At least 15 implementing partners in at least 10 countries committed to hosting GBS hubs, and formally signed up by Q2, year 3.		3.2.1 11 implementing partners in six countries have committed to hosting GBS hubs.	3.2.1 Identification of additional implementing partners will be identified during Y2.
3.2.2. Business plan finalised and published by the end of year 3.		3.2.2 This activity is scheduled for Y3.	3.2.2 This activity is scheduled for Y3.
Activity 3.3 3.3.1. GBS communication and PR plan drafted by the end of Q1, year 3.		3.3.1 This activity is scheduled for Y2-3	3.3.1 A communication and PR plan for the GBS will begin to be drafted during Y2 Q3-4.
3.3.2. GBS officially launched at UNFCCC COP29 in Q3, year 3		3.3.2 This activity is scheduled for Y3.	3.3.2 This activity is scheduled for Y3.
3.3.3. GBS final communication and PR plan published by the end of year 3.		3.3.3 This activity is scheduled for Y3.	3.3.3 This activity is scheduled for Y3.

Activity 3.4 3.4.1. Target tree planting practitioners and financiers to promote adoption of GBS certification (see output 4)		3.4.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.	3.4.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.
Activity 3.5 3.5.1. Setting up a standard, repeatable and robust framework for measuring impact of GBS methodology at the local scale by monitoring a set of socio-ecological indicators (carbon sequestration, soil conservation, rural household reached, job creation) by end of project (matched funding dependent)		3.5.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.	3.5.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.
3.5.2. Identify priority areas for further implementation of GBS methodology based on a set of relevant indicators (e.g., biodiversity loss, population density, land degradation, connectedness to existing natural forests) to upscale local impact to national and regional scale by project end.		3.5.2 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.	3.5.2 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.
Output 4. The Global Biodiversity Standard and certification adopted and used by policymakers, financiers, brokers and practitioners of tree-planting, reforestation and forest restoration managing at least 250 sites in at least 10 countries by project end.	4.1. GBS certification scheme promoted in at least 10 countries by the end of year 4.	4.1 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y4.	
	4.2. GBS certification achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/ forest restoration projects in at least 10 countries by project end.	4.2 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y4-5.	
	4.3. At least 5 governments, 20 companies and 10 NGOs/CBOs recommending or mandating the use of the Standard by project end.	4.3 Activities to achieve this output are planned for Y3-5.	
Activity 4.1 4.1.1. Project partners and GBS hub organisations promote the GBS scheme in at least 10 countries via their websites and newsletters and through meetings with policymakers, financiers, and practitioners of tree planting/forest restoration to encourage GBS uptake.		4.1.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4.	4.1.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4.
4.1.2. A further 4 hubs (i.e., 14 hubs in total) are identified and formalised in a further 4 countries (i.e., 10 countries in total) by the end of year 4.		4.1.2 This activity is scheduled for Y4.	4.1.2 This activity is scheduled for Y4.
Activity 4.2 4.2.1. GBS assessments carried out and results certified at >250 sites in at least 10 countries during years 4 and 5.		4.2.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.	4.2.1 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.
Activity 4.3 4.3.1. Meetings arranged with governments and donor agencies, including FCDO, at or shortly after UNFCCC COP29 in Q3, year 3 coinciding with the launch of the GBS to raise awareness of the Standard and certification process.		4.3.1 This activity is scheduled for Y3.	4.3.1 This activity is scheduled for Y3.
4.3.2. BGCI, SER, CIFOR-ICRAF, and project corporate partners (Ecosia, 1t.org and Etihad) promote the adoption of the Standard and certification to their peers, including leading by example, during years 4 and 5.		4.3.2 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.	4.3.2 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.
4.3.3. BGCI, SER, CIFOR-ICRAF, and Plan Vivo promote the adoption of the GBS to the NGO community through our own platforms, through the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration, and through NGO tree planting fora such as the Global Evergreening Alliance, during years 4 and 5.		4.3.3 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.	4.3.3 This activity is scheduled for Y4-5.

Annex 2: Project's full current logframe as presented in the application form (unless changes have been agreed)

Project Summary	SMART Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
Impact: Biodiversity impacts of tree-planting and forest restoration for carbon sequestration and livelihoods are valued by policy-makers, financiers and practitioners, and 'right tree, right place' practices lead to better biodiversity/livelihood outcomes (Max 30 words)			
Outcome: Global Biodiversity Standard certification achieved by 250 tree-planting/restoration projects, ≥200 people trained and 10 hubs of biodiversity assessment and restoration mentoring expertise established in 6 highly biodiverse countries by 2027. (Max 30 words)	0.1. Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) methodology completed and applications available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2. 0.2. At least 10 training hubs established, ≥200 people trained and comprehensive data tools and resources available in at least 6 highly biodiverse countries by the end of year 3. 0.3. A self-sustaining business model and plan for scaling up the GBS to at least 10 biodiverse countries worldwide developed by the end of year 3. 0.4. GBS certification applied for and achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/ forest restoration projects by project end.	0.1. Published methodology online and application forms available online in English, Portuguese, French and Spanish. 0.2. Project report; training attendance records; knowledge/understanding attainment confirmed via testing; certificates issued; data library online. 0.3. Project report; options paper; business plan; report on effectiveness of the model; PR and outreach strategy. 0.4. No. of applications for GBS certification; no. of GBS certificates issued.	COVID-19 or other national/global disruption does not prevent the deployment of local or international expertise for site testing and methodological development (see below). Carrying out GBS assessments is financially viable for local entities (e.g. botanic gardens, existing certification organizations, other types of biodiversity/ agroforestry/forest restoration organizations) and can compete with other income-generating priorities (see below). A cost-effective but scientifically robust methodology is affordable to a wide range of practitioners (see below). Biodiversity impacts carry financial incentives either as a risk or as an opportunity and are sufficiently attractive to financiers, brokers and practitioners of tree-planting and forest restoration to apply for certification (see below).
Outputs: **1**. A scientifically credible, objective, and accessible Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) and certification methodology in place and available to tree-planting and	1.1. Draft GBS certification assessment methodology developed by the end of year 1. 1.2. Draft methodology tested in real world conditions in at least 6 countries by the end of year 2.	1.1. Draft methodology published in report. 1.2. Feedback records from assessors and site-managers.	COVID-19 or other national/global disruption does not prevent the deployment of local expertise for site testing (mitigated by wide potential selection of partner institutions/countries and the

forest restoration initiatives by the end of year 2.	1.3. Methodology refined and finalised by end of year 2. 1.4. GBS application process available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2.	1.3. Final methodology published online. 1.4. Online application forms available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French.	possibility of moving testing to another country). Tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners are willing to participate in the testing phase (low risk; Ecosia, Plan Vivo and 1t.org have agreed to participate).
2. Hubs of expertise and data established to support Global Biodiversity Standard assessments and forest restoration mentorship in at least 6 highly biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.	2.1. At least 10 training hubs established in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of quarter 2, year 1. 2.2. Full suite of GBS training materials developed by the end of quarter 2, year 2. 2.3. At least 200 people from at least 10 highly biodiverse countries (50% women) trained in biodiversity assessment and ecological restoration mentoring by the end of year 3. 2.4. Comprehensive data on spatial distribution of biodiversity, seed sources, vegetation and tree distribution, socio-economic biodiversity values etc. compiled, processed and available online for at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3. 2.5. Climate Resilience Assessment Tool and other spatial seed source and tree-planting guidance tools available online by the end of year 3. 2.6. Germination/propagation protocols available online for at least	2.1. Project report; photos of training hubs and lists of staff at each hub. 2.2. Training materials, including webinars, powerpoints and other online materials available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French. 2.3. Training attendance records; knowledge attainment documented through testing (both field and “classroom” based); certificates issued. 2.4. Data library portals online 2.5. Climate Resilience Assessment Tool and other tools available online in portals 2.6. No. of records in BGCI’s propagation protocols database online	COVID-19 or other national/global disruption doesn’t prevent the deployment of international expertise to lead training and development (Mitigated by online training and a regional/national approach to face to face capacity building). Global partners with biodiversity data and/or forest restoration information are willing to share their data and data tools (low risk: much of these data is already in the public domain). Biodiversity, agroforestry, restoration, or other certification institutions/entities are willing to host training and data hubs (to a large degree this will be dependent on 3, below).

	10,000 tree species in Darwin eligible countries by project end.		
3. A self-sustaining business model and plan for scaling up the Global Biodiversity Standard (GBS) to at least 10 highly biodiverse countries and a communications plan for promoting the GBS worldwide developed by the end of year 3.	3.1. Business model options paper developed and published by the end of year 2. 3.2. Business Plan finalised and published by the end of year 3 3.3. GBS Communication and Public Relations (PR) Plan published by end of year 3. 3.4 Business and Communications/PR Plans under implementation in years 4-5. 3.5 Business development on the prototype for return on investment (ROI) on use of the GBS methodology with respect to socio-economic and environmental outcomes (carbon sequestration, soil conservation, rural household reached, job creation). (matched funding dependent)	3.1. Project report; options paper. 3.2. Published Business Plan. 3.3. Communication and PR plan. 3.4 Communications and PR materials. 3.5 Report published.	Hosting the GBS hubs and carrying out the certification assessments is financially viable for local biodiversity institutions and can compete with other income-generating priorities (low risk; we believe that it is possible for host entities to cover their costs and still be affordable compared to the very expensive schemes currently available).
4. The Global Biodiversity Standard and certification adopted and used by policy-makers, financiers, brokers and practitioners of tree-planting, reforestation and forest restoration managing at least 250 sites in at least 10 countries by project end.	4.1. GBS certification scheme promoted in at least 10 countries by the end of year 4. 4.2. GBS certification achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/ forest restoration projects in at least 10 countries by project end. 4.3. At least 5 governments, 20 companies and 10 NGOs/CBOs recommending or mandating the use of the Standard by project end.	4.1. Media coverage metrics; meeting records; enquiries received and responded to 4.2. No. of GBS applications; no. of GBS assessments complete and certificates issued. 4.3. No. of policy documents recommending or mandating use of standard.	Positive biodiversity impacts carry financial incentives either as a risk or as an opportunity and/or are sufficiently attractive to financiers, brokers and practitioners of tree-planting and forest restoration to apply for certification (mitigated by working with biodiversity +ve corporate partners packaging biodiversity and carbon together in premium packages). A cost-effective but scientifically robust methodology is affordable to a wide range of practitioners. (Risk

			reduced by already having a strong technical network in place).

Activities (each activity is numbered according to the output that it will contribute towards, for example 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 are contributing to Output 1)

Output 1.1. Draft GBS certification assessment methodology developed by the end of year 1

1.1.3. Development of GBS certification methodology components assessment methodology, including online application process, remote sensing review and ground survey methodology, sub-contracted to technical partners by the end of Q1, year 1.

1.1.4. Draft GBS certification assessment methodology developed and published in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish online by the end of Q4, year 1

Output 1.2. Draft methodology tested in real world conditions in at least 6 countries by the end of year 2

1.2.1. Agreements signed with at least 12 tree-planting/forest restoration project sites in at least 6 different biodiverse countries by the end of Q4, year 1.

1.2.2. Online application, remote sensing and ground survey methods tested with at least 12 tree-planting/forest restoration project sites in at least 6 different highly biodiverse countries by the end of Q3, year 2.

Output 1.3. Methodology refined and finalised by end of year 2.

1.3.3. Meetings held with project site practitioners and assessors, and verbal and written feedback received by the end of Q3, year 2.

1.3.4. Final methodology agreed and published online by the end of Q4, year 2.

Output 1.4. GBS application process available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2.

1.4.3. GBS certification launched and publicised at UNFCCC COP-28 by the end of year 2

1.4.4. GBS application available online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2.

Output 2.1. At least 10 training hubs established in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of Q2, year 2

2.1.1. At least 10 GBS hub host entities in at least 6 biodiverse countries identified and equipped with computers, survey and inventory equipment by the end of Q2, year 2

2.1.2. Potential trainers in each training hub vetted and identified by the end of year 1.

Output 2.2. Full suite of GBS training materials developed and delivered to training hubs by the end of Q2, year 2

2.2.1. Data, tools and resources necessary for GBS assessments specific to each training hub collated and used in at least 10 hubs in 6 biodiverse countries by the end of Q2, year 2.

2.2.2. Training modules in GBS and ER (online and face to face) developed in English, Spanish and French by the end of Q2, year 2.

Output 2.3. At least 200 people from at least 10 biodiverse countries (50% women) trained in biodiversity assessment and forest restoration mentoring by the end of year 3.

2.3.1. At least 20 trainers trained and certified in GBS assessment by the end of year 2

2.3.2. At least a further 180 people trained and certified in GBS assessment (≥200 people total), including through either formal CERP level achievement or through a dedicated certificate, issued by the SER CERP program credentialing these people as qualified to conduct GBS audits related to tree-planting and reforestation/forest restoration by the end of year 3.

Output 2.4. Comprehensive data on spatial distribution of biodiversity, seed sources, vegetation and tree distribution, socio-economic biodiversity values etc. compiled, processed and available online for at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.

2.4.1. Digital potential vegetation maps (high resolution corresponding to the resolution of biocllimatic raster data) available online providing natural habitat reference data for at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.
2.4.2. Provide guidelines on compiling, cleaning and bias-reduction of geospatial data on species occurrence, including from GBIF and BIEN by end of year 2.
2.4.3 Comprehensive geo-referenced tree species digital distribution data available to GBS assessors and mentors in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3 (note that access to data on distributions of rare and threatened species will be carefully managed).

Output 2.5. Climate Resilience Assessment Tool and other spatial seed source and tree-planting guidance tools available online by the end of year 3

2.5.1. Climate Resilience Assessment Tool calibrated for native tree floras and available to tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners in at least 6 biodiverse countries by the end of year 3.
2.5.2. Tree planting/forest restoration practitioners have access to and are familiar with the different databases, guidelines and maps available via the Global Tree Knowledge Platform (https://www.worldagroforestry.org/tree-knowledge) by the end of year 3

Output 2.6. Germination/propagation protocols available online for at least 10,000 tree species in at least 10 Darwin eligible biodiverse countries by project end.

2.6.1. Germination protocols for native tree species in at least 10 highly biodiverse countries available digitally online and accessible to tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners through a forest restoration resource hub and tools such as SER's Restoration Resource Center, Kew's Seed Information Database (n= at least 10,000 native tree species), and the UN FAO/CIFOR-ICRAF Transformative Partnership Platform for Agroecology by project end.
2.6.2. Propagation and aftercare protocols for native species in at least 10 Darwin eligible biodiverse countries available digitally online and accessible to tree-planting/forest restoration practitioners through an ER resource hub and BGCI's PlantSearch propagation tool (n= at least 10,000 native tree species) by project end.

Output 3.1. Business model options paper developed and published by the end of year 2.
3.1.1. Data collected on costs associated with carrying out GBS assessments throughout testing phase (i.e. by end of Q3, year 2)
3.1.2. Market analysis (internet research, questionnaire and interviews) carried out to gather data on costs and cost/benefits of other certification schemes to estimate (1) demand for biodiversity certification, and (2) competitive charging rates by end of Q3, year 2
3.1.3. Business model options paper developed by the end of year 2, and shared with implementing partners.

Output 3.2. Business Plan finalised and published by the end of year 3
3.2.1. At least 15 implementing partners in at least 10 countries committed to hosting GBS hubs, and formally signed up by Q2, year 3
3.2.2. Business plan finalised and published by the end of year 3.

Output 3.3. GBS Communication and Public Relations (PR) Plan published by end of year 3.
3.3.1. GBS communication and PR plan drafted by the end of Q1, year 3

3.3.2. GBS officially launched at UNFCCC COP29 in Q3, year 3
3.3.3. GBS final communication and PR plan published by the end of year 3

Output 3.4 Business and Communications/PR Plans implemented in years 4-5.
3.4.1. Target tree planting practitioners and financiers to promote adoption of GBS certification (see output 4)

Output 3.5 Business development on the prototype for return on investment (ROI) on use of the GBS methodology with respect to socio-economic and environmental outcomes (carbon sequestration, soil conservation, rural household reached, job creation).
3.5.1. Setting up a standard, repeatable and robust framework for measuring impact of GBS methodology at the local scale by monitoring a set of socio-ecological indicators (carbon sequestration, soil conservation, rural household reached, job creation) by end of project (matched funding dependent)
3.5.2. Identify priority areas for further implementation of GBS methodology based on a set of relevant indicators (e.g. biodiversity loss, population density, land degradation, connectedness to existing natural forests) to upscale local impact to national and regional scale by project end.

Output 4.1. GBS certification scheme promoted in at least 10 highly biodiverse countries by the end of year 4
4.1.1. Project partners and GBS hub organisations promote the GBS scheme in at least 10 countries via their websites and newsletters and through meetings with policymakers, financiers and practitioners of tree planting/forest restoration to encourage GBS uptake.
4.1.2. A further 4 hubs (i.e. 14 hubs in total) are identified and formalised in a further 4 countries (i.e. 10 countries in total) by the end of year 4.

Output 4.2. GBS certification achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/forest restoration projects in at least 10 countries by project end.
4.2.1. GBS assessments carried out and results certified at >250 sites in at least 10 countries during years 4 and 5.

Output 4.3. At least 5 governments, 20 companies and 10 NGOs/CBOs recommending or mandating the use of the Standard by project end.
4.3.1. Meetings arranged with governments and donor agencies, including FCDO, at or shortly after UNFCCC COP29 in Q3, year 3 coinciding with the launch of the GBS to raise awareness of the Standard and certification process.
4.3.2. BGCI, SER, CIFOR-ICRAF, and project corporate partners (Ecosia, 1t.org and Etihad) promote the adoption of the Standard and certification to their peers, including leading by example, during years 4 and 5.
4.3.3. BGCI, SER, CIFOR-ICRAF, and Plan Vivo promote the adoption of the GBS to the NGO community through our own platforms, through the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration, and through NGO tree planting fora such as the Global Evergreening Alliance, during years 4 and 5.

Annex 3: Standard Indicators

Table 1 Project Standard Indicators

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggre-gation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Year 4 Total	Year 5 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
D1-A01	At least a further 180 people trained and certified in GBS assessment (≥200 people total), including through either formal CERP level achievement or through a dedicated certificate, issued by the SER CERP program credentialing these people as qualified to conduct GBS audits related to tree-planting and reforestation/forest restoration by the end of year 3.	Number of people from key national and local stakeholders completing structured and relevant training	People	Men Women	0 0					0	200
DI-A03	At least 15 implementing partners in at least 10 countries committed to hosting GBS hubs, and formally signed up by Q2, year 3.	Number of local/national organisations4 with improved capability and capacity as a result of project.	Number of organisations	None	10					10	15
DI-A05	At least 20 trainers trained and certified in GBS assessment by the end of year 2	Number of trainers trained reporting to have delivered further training by the end of the project.	People trained	Men Women	0 0					0	20
DI-A07	At least 5 governments recommending or mandating the use of the Standard by project end	Number of government institutions/departments with enhanced awareness and understanding of biodiversity and associated poverty issues	Government institutions	None	0					0	5
DI-C01	Germination/propagation protocols available online for at least 10,000 tree species in at least 10 Darwin eligible	Number of best practice guides and knowledge	Number	None	0					0	10,000

DI Indicator number	Name of indicator using original wording	Name of Indicator after adjusting wording to align with DI Standard Indicators	Units	Disaggre-gation	Year 1 Total	Year 2 Total	Year 3 Total	Year 4 Total	Year 5 Total	Total to date	Total planned during the project
	biodiverse countries by project end.	products published and endorsed.									
DI-C07	GBS certification achieved by at least 250 tree-planting/forest restoration projects in at least 10 countries by project end.	Number of projects contributing biodiversity conservation or poverty reduction evidence to policy/regulation/standards consultations.	Number	None	0					0	250
DI-C10	Number of case studies published.	Number of case studies published.	Number	Sustainable Use	0					0	2
DI-C17	Business model options paper developed and published by the end of year 2.	Number of unique papers submitted to peer reviewed journals	Number	None	1					1	2
DI-C18	Business model options paper developed and published by the end of year 2.	Number of papers published in peer reviewed journals	Number	None	0					0	2
DI-C19	GBS application process available to tree-planting and forest restoration practitioners online in English, Spanish, Portuguese and French by the end of year 2.	Number of other publications produced	Number	English French Spanish Portuguese	0					0	4

Checklist for submission

	Check
Different reporting templates have different questions, and it is important you use the correct one. Have you checked you have used the **correct template** (checking fund, type of report (i.e. Annual or Final), and year) and **deleted the blue guidance text** before submission?	Checked
Is the report less than 10MB? If so, please email to BCF-Reports@niras.com putting the project number in the Subject line.	Checked
Is your report more than 10MB? If so, please discuss with BCF-Reports@niras.com about the best way to deliver the report, putting the project number in the Subject line.	Checked
Have you included means of verification? You should not submit every project document, but the main outputs and a selection of the others would strengthen the report.	Checked
Do you have hard copies of material you need to submit with the report? If so, please make this clear in the covering email and ensure all material is marked with the project number. However, we would expect that most material will now be electronic.	Checked
If you are submitting photos for publicity purposes, do these meet the outlined requirements (see section 16)?	Checked
Have you involved your partners in preparation of the report and named the main contributors	Checked
Have you completed the Project Expenditure table fully?	Checked
Do not include claim forms or other communications with this report.	